

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The amendments to the specification are merely to correct typographical errors and so do not constitute new matter. Support for the changes in the reference numbers is found in the drawings referred to.

Turning to the merits, claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 USC 102 and 103 for various reasons. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Specifically, claims 1, 3-4 and 9 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Wilson U.S. Patent No. 3,583,627 ("Wilson"), the Examiner reasoning that Wilson discloses all of the claimed limitations, including a pressure-resistant sleeve 22 that applies compressive force to hold the membrane fluid-tight against an aperture. In response, applicant points out that claims 1, 3-4 and 9 have been cancelled, rendering this rejection technically moot. In addition, applicant points out that element 22 of Wilson is not a pressure-resistant sleeve, but rather is a threaded connection. See Wilson column 1, lines 66-67. In any event, new independent claim 10 is submitted to be distinguishable from Wilson in that Wilson does not disclose a two-sided filtration insert that is matingly engaged by a separate two-part pressure-resistant sleeve. Since the rest of the remaining claims, namely, claims 5 and 7-8, all depend from new claim 10, they are submitted to be distinguishable from Wilson as well.

Claims 1-3 and 5 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Vassarotti U.S. Patent No. 5,647,990 ("Vassarotti"), the Examiner

reasoning that Vassarotti discloses all of the limitations of those claims, including a pressure-resistant sleeve 25 that applies compressive force to hold the membrane fluid-tight against an aperture, and that the sleeve may comprise one or two parts, pointing to elements 25 and 5 as comprising a two-part sleeve. In response, applicant again points out that claims 1-3 have been cancelled, rendering their rejection moot. Applicant further points out that the Vassarotti's sleeve 25 actually constitutes part of the filtration chamber and that is the reason it is provided with filtrate outlet channels 9. Furthermore, element 5 is not a sleeve and does not exert compressive forces to seal the membrane; instead, element 5 is a filtrate recovery tube (see column 3, lines 61-62) or a filtrate reservoir (see column 4, line 67). In any event, new independent claim 10 is submitted to be patentably distinguishable from Vassarotti, which does not disclose a two-sided filtration insert matingly engaged by a two-part pressure-resistant sleeve that is separate from the filtration insert. Because claim 5 is dependent from claim 10 and so necessarily contains the same limitations, that claim is submitted to be patentably distinguishable as well.

Claims 1 and 7-8 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Root et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,948,564 ("Root"), the Examiner reasoning that Root teaches all of the limitations of those claims, including a pressure-resistant sleeve 150 in FIG. 8 that applies compressive force to hold the membrane fluid-tight against an aperture. In response, applicant points out that claim 1 has been cancelled, rendering its rejection moot. Applicant respectfully

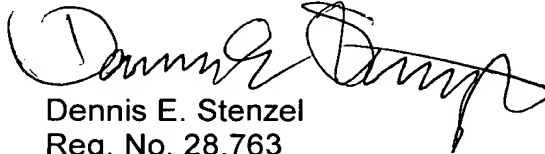
takes issue with the Examiner's assertion that element 150 of Root's FIG. 8 comprises a pressure-resistant sleeve that applies compressive force to hold the membrane fluid-tight against an aperture. Specifically, element 150 is a vertical flange, the purpose of which is to "assist in aligning the assembly." See column 7, lines 43-46. Since Root does not teach a two-sided filtration insert matingly engaged by a separate two-part pressure resistant sleeve, new claim 10 is submitted to be patentably distinguishable therefrom. Since claims 7 and 8 both depend from new claim 10 and so contain the same limitations, those claims are submitted to be patentably distinguishable from Root as well.

Claims 4 and 6 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vassarotti, the Examiner reasoning that Vassarotti teaches all of the limitations of claims 1-3 and 5 plus the use of a rectangular gasket element 24 in FIG. 2 and a half cylindrical and tapering or conical sleeve 25 in FIG. 7, and concluding that it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the rectangular gasket to be shaped as an O-ring and change the Vassarotti half-cylindrical sleeve to be one that is generally cylindrical and tapering or conical. In response, applicant points out that claims 4 and 6 have both been cancelled, rendering this rejection moot.

Application No. 09/913,781
Amdt. dated November 3, 2003

For the reasons stated, early and favorable reconsideration is
respectfully solicited.

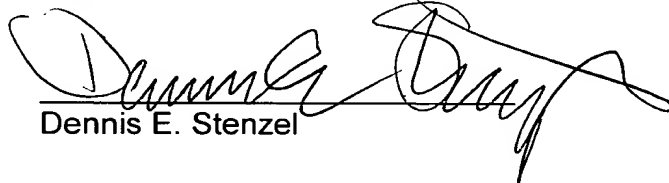
Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this AMENDMENT, together with Certificate of Mailing and Return Acknowledgment Postcard, is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Non-Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on this 3d day of November, 2003.


Dennis E. Stenzel